

STUDY & DISCUSSION GUIDE

# Emotionally Healthy Discipleship



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## DEAR LEADER,

Welcome! You are about to embark on a journey that has the potential to change not only your life but your entire ministry.

Implementing a discipleship that deeply transforms people for the sake of the world requires courage because it's about so much more than simply making a few minor tweaks in your ministry. It requires adopting a new and long-term vision for your church, one based on a biblical paradigm shift that impacts how you approach everything about ministry and leadership.

We lead out of who we are more than what we do or say. This means any significant change you hope to experience in your church necessarily begins with you and every other leader—staff and volunteer—in your church.

Such transformation requires intentionality, prayer, and companions for the journey. I pray you and your group provide that kind of support for one another as you take your next steps.

My hope is that the insights and practices you discover in *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship* will give you a fresh vision to build a spiritual counterculture that deeply transforms lives. As you and your team courageously set aside time to learn and be equipped, my prayer is that you will experience God's love more profoundly and become the leaders God intends you to be. And, in the process, may you experience an infusion of God's power for the sake of the world around you.

Blessings to you,

*Pete*

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# Facilitator Guidelines

## PREPARE YOURSELF

- If you are the senior leader of your group, you may choose to facilitate the study yourself, to delegate facilitation to another group member, or to rotate facilitation among members from week to week.
- Read through the book chapter and corresponding discussion guide before each session. Becoming familiar with the flow of the questions will allow you to comfortably facilitate the discussion.
- Short chapter videos are also available from [emotionallyhealthy.org/discipleshipvideos](http://emotionallyhealthy.org/discipleshipvideos).
- Participate in the group as a member. When appropriate, lead by example by being vulnerable and open in sharing experiences from your own journey.
- Relax. You don't need to be an expert. Freely say, "I don't know" when someone asks a question you can't answer.
- You are an expert only on your own journey. Respect where each person is in his/her personal journey with Christ. The Holy Spirit will prompt and lead each person differently and at a different pace through this material. Remember that people change slowly—and that includes you!

## LEAD THE GROUP

- Create and maintain a safe environment for sharing. Devote your full attention to each person who speaks. When appropriate, affirm the value of participants' comments, questions, and vulnerability.
- Discussion questions are designed to promote self-discovery and self-disclosure. Make it clear that sharing is a choice. Invite, but don't pressure. Everyone always has the option to share or not share.
- Begin and end on time. Although the nature of this material lends itself to lengthy sharing, it's best to pace the discussion for a fifty-five-minute block of time. If a topic generates considerable interest, it's better to continue the discussion in a subsequent meeting rather than go over time.
- If your group is larger than six people, you may want to split into smaller groups or pairs for some questions so everyone has a chance to participate within the allotted time.

- Read the “Discussion Guidelines for the Group” (page 6) as you begin Session 1 and 2. They provide a framework for having a meaningful discussion.
- The “Highlights” section at the beginning of each session is meant to refresh participants’ memories of what they have read in the book. It is not expected that you read it aloud.
- In the “Discussion” section, some sessions include multiple questions on a given topic. In order to complete the session within the allotted time, you may need to choose just one question for discussion. Also note that each session intentionally begins with the same question, “What stands out most to you about this chapter?” This open-ended question gives participants a chance to comment on what matters most to them whether or not that topic is addressed in the remaining questions.
- The discussion guide assumes participants have read the corresponding chapters in *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship* before your meeting. Conclude each meeting by noting the “Reading Assignment” for the next meeting.
- The “Going Deeper” section provides options for those who want to deepen their learning between sessions.

# Discussion Guidelines for the Group

## COME PREPARED

To get the most out of our time together, complete the reading assignment prior to our meeting. Also bring your book with you to each meeting.

## CREATE SAFETY AND MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

Sharing is optional, not required.

Devote your full attention to each person who speaks. Be sensitive, kind, and generous to one another with your comments.

Honor one another by maintaining confidentiality. Anything shared within the group should not be repeated outside the group.

## SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

Limit your sharing to your own experiences by using “I” statements. For example, “I feel angry when he does that,” rather than, “He makes me angry.” Making “I” statements is a way to take responsibility for thoughts and emotions rather than attributing them to someone else.

## REFRAIN FROM DOMINATING DISCUSSIONS

Be brief in your sharing so that everyone has an opportunity to speak.

## TURN TO WONDER

If you feel judgmental or defensive when someone else is sharing, turn those feelings to wonder instead. Ask yourself, *I wonder what brought her to this belief. I wonder what he is feeling right now. I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself.*

## WELCOME SILENCE

Attentive listening includes silence. If that happens, refrain from rushing in with comments.

Use any silence as an opportunity to continue listening—to what was just said, to your own heart, and to the Holy Spirit.

## JUST SAY NO TO FIXING, SAVING, AND SETTING OTHER PEOPLE STRAIGHT

Respect each person’s journey and trust the Holy Spirit to prompt and lead each person differently and at a different pace. Focus on providing support and acceptance rather than instruction, accountability, or correction. This applies at all times—within the meeting and beyond the meeting.